

Rebecca Neville

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Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Rebecca Neville
Subject: Setting the Record Straight on Georgian Dream's COVID-19 Response & Economic Track Record

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Setting the Record Straight on Georgian Dream's COVID-19 Response & Economic Track Record

Once again, Lithuanian Member of European Parliament, [Andrius Kubilius](#), has taken to spreading disinformation throughout the European Union against the Georgian Dream-led government in an effort to interfere with the upcoming 31 October Parliamentary elections and prop-up the UNM-led opposition.

Kubilius claims the Georgian Dream-led government has led a “poor pandemic response” and a “stalling economy”.

Let’s be clear: Kubilius is entitled to his own opinions, but he is not entitled to his own facts.

Here are the facts Kubilius has conveniently failed to disclose on Georgia’s COVID response:

- World Health Organisation Regional Director for Europe, Hans Kluge, has commended the Georgian government for its early response stating, “Georgia is one of the countries which, early on, implemented public health measures. Georgia - in fact, I must really commend [it] - goes a step further. Namely, working on an economic recovery plan - with putting health as a top political priority.”
- EU Ambassador Carl Hartzell said, “I would like to congratulate the Georgian government and the Georgian politicians for doing what all evidence suggest is the right approach – to act early and to act robustly.”
- U.S. Ambassador Kelly Degnan stated, “The United States will continue to work closely with the government, which has done an impressive job steering Georgia through the COVID-19 crisis.”
- MEP Dace Melbarde praised Georgia stating, “Georgia, another country where the government has received worldwide praise for its handling of

the pandemic. [Rates] in Georgia puts the country, along with South Korea, in the top tier in terms of containing the virus.”

- Moreover, Georgian Dream party chairman and founder, Bidzina Ivanishvili, has contributed along with his family 100 million Georgian Lari, or about £25.5 million, to the #STOPCOV FUND of the Government of Georgia” to fight against COVID-19 “making Bidzina Ivanishvili the world's most generous donor in fight against Covid-19.”

In regards to MEP Kubilius’ comments that Georgia has a stalled economy:

- International institutions have been praising Georgian Dream’s economic track record:
 - The World Bank recently praised Georgia as a “star reformer” as a result of Georgian Dream’s “deep reforms in economic management” that have triggered robust economic growth.
 - Poverty has been cut in half from 32.5 percent in 2006 to 16.3 percent in 2017 as “the poor have benefitted considerably from the Government’s social policies” and “new economic opportunities.”
 - The World Bank Annual “Doing Business” rankings place Georgia 7th best in the world – ahead of the UK and Australia, and well above 26 of the 27 EU Member States.
 - Georgia is now #2 in the world as a location to start a business – ahead of every country except New Zealand
 - Georgia’s GNI per capita is currently the highest in the region

- The world-renowned think tank Fraser Institute released its annual [*"Economic Freedom of the World – 2020 Annual Report"*](#), highlighting Georgia amongst the world leaders in terms of economic freedom. [*"Georgia is ranked in 8th place in the world in terms of the most economically free countries, behind only Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, Australia, the United States, and Mauritius"*](#), confirms the Fraser Institute's annual Economic Freedom of the World report for 2020.
- The annual [Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Index](#) report highlight the significant progress being made in Georgia, especially the Georgian Dream government's efforts to boost the economy and fight corruption. The recently released 2020 report shows [*"Georgia's score climbing to 77.1, the 12th best in the world for the year – up 1.2 points from the previous report"*](#). Key highlights:
 - GDP: \$42.6 billion, a 4.7% year-on-year growth rate, with a 4.0% compound annual growth rate
 - Unemployment levels have fallen to 14.1%
 - Inflation sits at a low 2.6%, a testament to government policies aimed at inflation control and debt management through responsible fiscal policy



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